



A Patient's Guide to Healthy Aging

This material is provided
by UCSF Weill Institute
for Neurosciences as
an educational resource
for patients.



UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences
Memory and Aging Center



What is healthy aging?

Many people older than age 65 live happy and healthy independent lives. Some changes in the ability to think are considered a normal part of the aging process, and most healthy older adults experience minor changes in some areas of their thinking skills. For example, some people may have changes in their short-term memory, such as difficulty remembering the name of a person they just met. Others may have trouble remembering words they don't use often or names of objects they see rarely. Concentration or attention can also get slightly worse in people that are aging normally.

What can I do to keep my mind healthy?

Some changes in thinking are caused by genes, life stressors, or other factors (such as medications or head injury). However, there are some things you can do to help delay or prevent thinking changes, and to keep your mind and body healthy.

- Stay away from (or quit) smoking
- Limit alcohol intake
- Seek treatment for depression or other mood problems
- Exercise (150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity, such as brisk walking)
- Engage in stimulating activities that you enjoy yet don't add stress to your life (this could include gardening, reading, playing board games, crossword puzzles, etc.)
- Maintain a healthy diet (limit saturated fats and include fruits and vegetables) and eat a variety of foods
- Engage in healthy sleep hygiene

Resources

- nihseniorhealth.gov/category/healthyaging.html
- nia.nih.gov/health/publication/alcohol-use-older-people
- nia.nih.gov/health/publication/good-nights-sleep
- cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults
- nia.nih.gov/health/publication/falls-and-fractures
- nia.nih.gov/health/older-drivers
- nia.nih.gov/health/quitting-smoking-older-adults